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# NAVEL REVUE



*Published Posthumously*
*By the Heirs of the Author*
DR. JAY HAHN-LONNE

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# FOREWORD

The dissertation contained in this little volume was originally given ostensibly as an extemporaneous speech by Dr. Jay Hahn-Lonne, following a dinner attended by a number of prominent Philadelphians early in the year 1920. Dr. Hahn-Lonne was at that time, and until his recent death, Dean of the small but highly esteemed Quackenbush College of Medicine and Human Anatomy in Philadelphia.

Dr. Hahn-Lonne was considered a great wit and a man of delicious humor by his associates, and he was greatly in demand as a speaker at fashionable dinners. Following this particular speech, he was literally besieged with importunities from his friends to have it printed for the whole world to read — his associates contending that he would thereby furnish a valuable contribution to the best of humorous literature.

The Doctor, however, with a shrug and an air of tolerant amusement, turned aside all this intimate urging. He contended that the thing had



been given upon the spur of the moment, and that he had but the foggiest of recollections as to what he had said. And thus the matter rested.

Subsequent to Dr. Hahn-Lonne's death in January of this year, however, his heirs, while sorting the Doctor's private papers, discovered a complete copy of the speech to which he had been so totally indifferent; and the heirs, feeling that it would be nothing short of a tragedy for so priceless a thing to be denied posterity, have authorized its publication.

This little book is the first public appearance of Dr. Jay Hahn-Lonne's classic after-dinner speech.

—The Publishers.

# NAVELS OF YESTERDAY

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: With your permission, and craving your indulgence for introducing a subject of slightly anatomical savor into an occasion essentially social, I should like to call your attention for a few moments to the subject of navels. By navels I am not referring to the variety of citrus fruit. I mean, rather, those delectable dents that indicate the bellyward termination of the umbilical cord through which we received sustenance from our maternal progenitors.

Here is a fascinating subject for speculation which has scarcely been scratched — except in cases where a foxtail or some other such grasseous substance has perchance become affixed to the undershirting — by the raconteurs of history. Aside from the anatomical knowledge to be derived from a study of navels, they present an opportunity for esthetic contemplation that to the artistic soul is a joy supreme. The dainty convolutions and shell-pink texture of a youthful, healthy, vibrant feminine navel present as ravishing and as

exquisite a subject for esthetic indulgence as the world of art contains.

The Ancients were aware of this, and in their wholesome pagan way they made the most of it. Bilitis, that joy-lady supreme who effected her delta denuding long before Mr. Gillette bestowed his great boon upon femininity, tells us in her "Songs" of how the courtesans of Carthage and Alexandria embellished their navels, as well as certain other of their charms, for masculine fascination.

In anicent Egypt the vestal virgins used to insert tiny lighted candles into their navels during ceremonies of adoration to Isis and Osiris.

In his memoirs Marcus Antonius comments upon the chafing of his girdle while at golf, because of the sunburned condition of his belly resulting from protracted exposure to the Egyptian sun while Cleopatra performed little tricks with Marc's navel as they floated in a house-boat upon the bosom of the Nile.

And Marc would take his turn at fondling Cleo's navel, but he informs us that her abdomen never became sunburned, as he, being one of the

most courteous of gentlemen, always intercepted the actinic rays with his back before anything like that could take place.

Certain contemporaneous chroniclers of historic Rome have written that one of Nero's favorite pastimes had to do with feminine navels. He and a selected number of jolly companions would group themselves within a circle of naked slave girls recumbent upon their backs, feet in and heads out like the spokes of a wheel. Each festive reveler was supplied with a given number of feathered darts, and the game consisted in ascertaining which contestant could land the greatest number of darts upright within the encircling female navels by tossing them into the air. Any dart that found an anatomical lodgement elsewhere, scored a half a point for the tosser.

Nero and his carefree companions used to spend days at this sport.

And there was still another navel game that used to be indulged in by Nero and his playmates. This was accomplished by turning the slave girls the other end 'round and rolling marbles between their breasts and along their bellies — any marble

lodging within a navel-dent scoring for the bowler.

In this hilarious sport the girls themselves were permitted to join. When a marble had rolled into a navel-dent and remained there, if the girl in question could manage, by certain apt and timely muscular contortions, to dislodge the marble in such a way that it continued to roll onward in its original direction; and if she could contrive to *catch* the marble by some adroit maneuver, or by behaving in such a manner that the marble secreted itself purely through the functioning of gravity, she was rewarded by having Nero cause the marble's reappearance by a clever bit of legerdemain with a wad of gum and a wand which he carried for that very purpose.

While mentioning Nero I should like to correct an erroneous impression which has come down through the ages. It has to do with the time-honored quotation that "Nero fiddled while Rome burned."

As the result of months of research among the ancient chronicles in the archives of Rome, I recently discovered that a careless interpreter some centuries ago was in error as regards an initial



letter. The consequence of this delinquency has been that posterity has always understood that Nero was "fiddling" as Rome went up in smoke when, as a matter of fact, he was doing nothing of the kind.

To be sure, Nero's activity was of a frictional nature, but it had nothing to do with string music.

However, and to return to our fascinating subject of navels, we also owe to the chroniclers of history an account of another royal recreation which was dependent upon navels for its indulgence. Gibbon, in his account of gay life in the court of Queen Elizabeth, paints a vivid picture of a very popular pastime among sixteenth century English nobility known as "Gentlemen Up." This game was conducted with all the pomp and ceremony of a royal ball. It could be indulged in by an unlimited number of people, and Gibbons informs us that it was Queen Elizabeth's favorite of all formal court functions.

This very aristocratic pastime was really quite naive and simple. The participants were paired off, male and female, and each couple was supplied with a metal disc equipped with an axle

and divided into numbered sections. The disc was held in a vertical position between the members of each pair by inserting the ends of the axle into their respective navels. The disc was then spun by the gentleman partner, and whatever number came to rest opposite a pointer which it devolved upon the gentleman to maintain in a firm and unwavering position, went to the credit of that particular couple.

Whenever a gentleman, because of fatigue or lack of attention, permitted his pointer to droop or waver, *that* couple was disqualified and required to retire from the game — very greatly, I do not doubt, to the chagrin of the lady partner.

The Queen apparently derived great enjoyment from the game of "Gentlemen Up" and she was invariably one of the winning couple, for she exercised her regal prerogative and always selected Sir Walter Raleigh as her partner; and this doughty warrior possessed the ability to keep *his* pointer rigidly fixed after all the other gentlemen of the court had been disqualified because of delinquencies.

Certain astute historians have hinted rather



broadly that Sir Walter's proficiency with his pointer while indulging in the game of "Gentlemen Up" had more than a little to do with his being knighted by his Queen.

Louis XV of France introduced a charming custom among the ladies of his court when they would repair to the royal palace at Versailles for the summer fetes. The king himself would affix gaily colored paper pinwheels into the navels of his court charmers during festivities in the gardens of a summer's evening, and the revolving of these brilliant and multicolored little whirligigs as the ladies strolled about the lawns and paths, was a pretty sight indeed.

And there was usually a little contest. Each beauty in turn would run briskly toward King Louis, stopping abruptly when directly in front of him; and the lady whose pinwheel continued to revolve for the longest time was honored by having bestowed upon her the privilege of conversing privately with the king later that night, after the fun and merrymaking. At which time, no doubt, Louis conferred more direct recognition upon the delicious dent that had held the winning pinwheel.

## NAVELS OF TODAY

Yes, ladies and gentlemen, the ancient pagans, and also those of more recent times, were very sensible about this navel business; but what is the attitude of us moderns toward the same? One of absolute perversion, I do assure you. Nowadays navels are taboo even as a topic for polite conversation, and as for their being something for mutual inspection and the exchange of compliments during conventional social intercourse — why, the very thought is harrowing.

No, in this day and age navels are simply secret little dents, to be periodically delinted in the privacy of our bathrooms — with a toothpick or the non-commercial end of a match. Very few of us are familiar with the intricacies of our own navels. Convention decrees that there shall be no one to *tell* us about them, and the very best that most of us can do is to acquire a severe crick in the neck in our efforts to do our own exploring.

As to the periodical delintation of navels, this process is much more intricate and involved in the

mid-western districts where huge quantities of wool are carried in immediate juxtaposition to the abdomen for seven consecutive days and nights or longer, than it is in certain other regions where feminine apparel consists of shoes, stockings, a dress and a brassiere worn *beneath* for elevating purposes rather than *over* for flattening effects.

Now, I am happy to say that I have always been free of the silly reticence toward navels that so many of my associates display. From early infancy these cunning carnal cavities have always fascinated me, the result being that I have become familiar with the navel-individualities of literally thousands of fair women whose conversations have interested me.

Years ago I started the practice of making wax impressions of the more unusual navels of these fair women whom I found so conversationally interesting. It is astonishing how distinct and individual these little waxen pegs are. I wonder that Bertillion did not introduce navel-pegs into his system of criminal identification, as well as thumb-prints; for undoubtedly each navel upon a human being possesses its own individual little

ridges, grooves, creases and delicate convolutions. I have found them a most fascinating study.

Upon rather plump women navels frequently present the casual appearance of just a little slit upon the alabaster smoothness of their rotund little bellies. But once you start a bit of separating and prying about, and there you are — a lovely, pulsating little navel, pinker and more delicate than usual because of the enfolding adipose tissue.

Occasionally rather startling discoveries are made in the process of becoming conversant with the navel of a plump woman whose conversation one has found to be interesting. I shall never forget the time I came upon a diamond sunburst which the owner had accused one of her servants of stealing — but that is another story.

As a contrast to the navels of rolly-polly little dames, we have those of the rather skinny ones. I was once subjected to a most harrowing experience in connection with one of this latter variety. In this instance I was quite horrified to find that, instead of an indentation, this lady's navel was a protuberance! You can perhaps picture my discomfiture upon making this weird discovery—the

creature's navel stuck right out like an exaggerated wart. And when the owner nonchalantly informed me that she utilized it as a sort of button effect for the retention of her under-panties — well, shortly after that I was at home, strenuously endeavoring to forget the entire episode.

Mentioning this protruding navel reminds me of a half-caste Dutch-Javanese girl whom I once knew in Batavia. This little coffee-with-cream colored creature possessed a most charming navel of normal aspect, but by expanding her belly she could plop the thing inside out — after the fashion of those toy rubber heads that protrude a tongue when squeezed.

In her naive way and with her quaint and pretty English, this lassie told me during our very first conversation together, of the charming little social trick she had, by alternately expanding and contracting her abdomen, of shooting her navel in and out of that of the gentleman with whom she found herself in interesting conversation. And when I intimated that I thought it very probable that the gentleman who was conversing with her in such an interesting manner, and whose navel



was being periodically penetrated by her inverted one, was perchance capable of performing a similar feat with a coupling of more robust proportions, she smiled coyly at me with lowered lids and I know that she understood my innuendo.

I once discovered a navel in San Francisco's Chinatown that touched my heart with pity. There was something about the circumstances surrounding this abdominal indentation that quite brought the tears to my eyes. It was about three inches deep, shaped like an inverted cone and sloping downward into the little creature's innards. I was quite aghast at the spectacle, and I could have wept when the child informed me that she was a Salvation Army lassie and that her navel had become that way by carrying banners through the streets.

One of the most unusual umbilical terminations I have ever encountered I found upon a girl with whom I was once conversing in a Hollywood pantry. Instead of a single indentation this girl appeared to have a groove running completely around her torso; and I tell you quite frankly that I gave no great credence to her explanation.

She told me that she was a dancer, and that she was once spun so violently by her partner that her navel cut the groove by circling completely about her.

I really should not fail to tell you of an American girl whom I met one summer in Nice, and who possessed a most charming sense of the ludicrous. Her navel was one of those concealed beneath delectable fatty folds, and she, knowing of my propensity for studying feminine navels, surreptitiously inserted a glass eye into it upon the first occasion of our finding ourselves sufficiently alone to indulge in a bit of uninterrupted conversation.

The very first glimpse of an interesting navel has always been the keenest of esthetic thrills to me, and to suddenly encounter this baby-blue orb seductively peering at me from the midst of this creature's kissable abdominal dimples, was one of the most novel and delightful experiences I have ever undergone.

Of all the feminine navels that I have studied in my search of the artistic in odd corners of the globe, I found but one which was not conven-



tionally located in the center of the belly. In New Orleans I became acquainted with a seamstress who was one of the most interesting conversationalists I have ever known; and this girl wore her navel so far south of its accustomed position that in the dark, or in undue haste, one might quite easily be mistaken.

In conclusion I should like, with your permission, to express the opinion that the superficiality of the age in which we live is deplorable. This superficiality is, of course and inevitably, accompanied by a bluntness of perception and appreciation of the truly beautiful in nature; and I know of nothing which more strikingly exemplifies our shallowness and lack of esthetics than the present day reticence toward our navels.

The prevailing mode in feminine apparel permits women of today to flaunt their charms (which charms may, in many, many instances, be more fittingly designated as simply possessions) uncriticized and with impunity. In a word, it is conventional, and consequently more or less surreptitious. It is not open and frank and wholesome. What we need, dear people, is a far greater degree of

mind-cleansing *nakedness*.

The present day tossing about of uncovered feminine legs, and the relegation of even brassieres to the ashcan, permits us anatomical glimpses that leave mighty little to the imagination; but navels, unfortunately, occupy a sort of middle-distance that eludes our vision. I mean, it is very seldom indeed that a lady's social deportment permits us to see *up* far enough, or *down* far enough, to catch a glimpse of her navel. And even in this extreme instance it is, as I say, merely a glimpse. There is no opportunity to look it squarely in the eye, so to speak, and revel in its daintiness and beauty.

Ah, how I could wish for the return of a sane mental attitude among women of *our* age such as prevailed among Bilitis and her courtesan sisters in those ancient countries of the Mediterranean.

I thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for the courteous attention you have given this brief dissertation, which I trust has proven of interest to you, if somewhat inapropos.

NAVEL-REVUE